

Publication

A new, narrowly distributed, and critically endangered species of spiny-throated reed frog (Anura: Hyperoliidae) from a highly threatened coastal forest reserve in Tanzania

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Author(s) Barratt, Christopher D.; Lawson, Lucinda P.; Bittencourt-Silva, Gabriela B.; Goggart, Nike; Morgan-Brown, Theron; Nagel, Peter; Loader, Simon P.

Author(s) at UniBasel [Barratt, Christopher](#) ; [Bittencourt, Gabriela](#) ; [Loader, Simon Paul](#) ; [Nagel, Peter](#) ;

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Amphibians are in decline globally due to increasing anthropogenic changes, and many species are at risk of extinction even before they are formally recognised. The Coastal Forests of Eastern Africa is a hotspot of amphibian diversity but is threatened by recent land use changes. Based on specimens collected in 2001 we identify a new species from the coastal forests of Tanzania. The new species belongs to the spiny-throated reed frog complex that comprises a number of morphologically similar species with highly fragmented population across the Eastern Afromontane Region, an adjacent biodiversity hotspot comprising of numerous isolated montane forests. The new species is the first coastal forest member of this otherwise montane clade. We formally describe this species, assess its distribution and conservation threat, and provide a revised key to species of the spiny-throated reed frog complex. We highlight the most important characters distinguishing the new species from the other similar reed frog species. Recent surveys at the type locality and also more broadly across the region failed to find this new species. The conservation threat of this species is critical as the only known locality (Ruvu South Forest Reserve) is currently subjected to devastating land use changes.

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